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shaped like a bird!

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win a pond!

We're teaming up with AquaScape to award one lucky winner a pond. Just tell us in 100 words or less why you need (or your friend needs) a pond, and our friends at AquaScape could be installing a pond in your backyard this spring. Learn how to enter at birdsandblooms.com/ pondcontest.

also find us on













from the editor

I love vacations.

The planning, the excitement, the chance of seeing a new-to-me bird—it's pure happiness.

While I've enjoyed trips to popular destinations like Orlando, Las Vegas, Los Angeles and New York, some of my best memories have come from vacations off the beaten path. You know—places where you can relax and reconnect with the natural world. If this sounds like your kind of destination, then our national parks



article (page 22) is just what you need to start planning your next trip.

We had room to highlight only six parks in the story, but there are many more fabulous places to check out around the country. Just last summer I went to Olympic National Park near my aunt, who lives in Sequim, Washington. It was a wonderful experience, and I loved that it gave me a chance to see the birds and plants of the Pacific Northwest.

How about you—what national park have you been to, and why did you love it? Send me an email at stacy@birdsandblooms.com. Better yet, send me your photos of birds or flowers taken in a national park. Maybe it'll help me plan my next vacation. Good luck planning yours!



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BUSINESS

VP, CHIEF SALES OFFICER $\operatorname{Mark} S$. Josephson VICE PRESIDENT, GROUP PUBLISHER $\operatorname{Russell} S$. Ellis

ADVERTISING

EDITORIAL SALES Wendy Lay

wendy.lay@rd.com

DISPLAY SALES Catherine Marcussen,

Matt Avery, John Dyckman, Ray Rienecker, Greg Messina, Alexis Aliquo alexis.aliquo@rd.com

DIRECT RESPONSE ADVERTISING Media People, Eric Genova egenova@mediapeople.com

TRAVEL

Northeast and Southeast: Alana Llewellyn, alana@mandelmediagroup.com Midwest and Southwest: Jerry Greco, jerry@jerrygreco.com;

Jerry Greco, jerry@jerrygreco.com; Susan Tauster, susant@taustermedia.com West: Bob Flahive, robert.flahive@flahive.com

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50-54	\$18.50	\$15.50	\$25.50	\$21.30	\$36.00	\$30.00	\$88.50	\$73.50
55-59	\$23.00	\$19.25	\$31.80	\$26.55	\$45.00	\$37.50	\$111.00	\$92.25
60-64	\$28.00	\$21.50	\$38.80	\$29.70	\$55.00	\$42.00	\$136.00	\$103.50
65-69	\$33.50	\$26.00	\$46.50	\$36.00	\$66.00	\$51.00	\$163.50	\$126.00
70-74	\$45.00	\$35.00	\$62.60	\$48.60	\$89.00	\$69.00	\$221.00	\$171.00
75-79	\$61.00	\$49.50	\$85.00	\$68.90	\$121.00	\$98.00	\$301.00	\$243.50
80-85	\$83.50	\$70.25	\$116.50	\$97.95	\$166.00	\$139.50	\$413.50	\$347.25

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backyard inspiration

>> Your monthly motivation to get outside.





feeder talk

Peanuts in the Backyard

You'll be impressed with the variety of birds you'll attract by offering peanuts at your feeder.



Peanuts are like a secret weapon for people who love to feed birds. They can be an expensive item to offer on a regular basis, but they'll bring in a wide variety of new birds. Jays seem to sense whenever peanuts are put out within a 5-mile radius. You won't see them in your yard for months or years, but as soon as you offer peanuts in a shell, they can appear within days or even hours!



Battling Squirrels

Yes, it's true that squirrels love peanuts just as much as birds. First of all—good luck. They sure can be persistent! However, there are a few peanut feeders out there that are designed to be squirrel-proof. Most are for out-of-shell peanuts. Otherwise, find a good squirrel baffle to keep those furry critters away. Another option—



buy a peanut feeder designed for squirrels! Many readers swear by the theory that if you give the squirrels their own place to eat, they'll leave the bird area alone.

Shell vs. No Shell

At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter—they're going to get eaten. But it can be fun to watch birds with those large, in-shell peanuts, taking them off to crack or cache. Keep in mind that they do require different feeders. So make sure you align your feeder with your feed.

Word of Warning

First off, don't offer salted peanuts or give birds your leftovers from the ball game. Next, if it's damp or rainy in your area, clean out those feeders because like other seed, peanuts can get moldy. If you know it's going to be rainy, conserve by just putting out a few peanuts at a time.



READER SNAPSHOT

"When I put peanuts out, I'll often joke to my wife that I'm putting out gold. Birds (like this titmouse) take notice right away, and they don't last long."

Edson Scudder Jr.
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

EXPERT ADVICE

"If you like offering peanuts, but find them a bit pricey, mix out-of-shell peanuts with black oil sunflower seeds. Both can be fed from the same feeder."

Kimberly Kaufman

B&B TIP

Don't get discouraged if you don't get peanut eaters right away. Remind yourself that it's worth the wait. Just look at the variety of birds you can add to your backyard when you offer peanuts:

Jays
Woodpeckers
Chickadees
Titmice
Nuthatches

Magpies Sparrows House finches Cardinals



february | march 2015

yard smarts





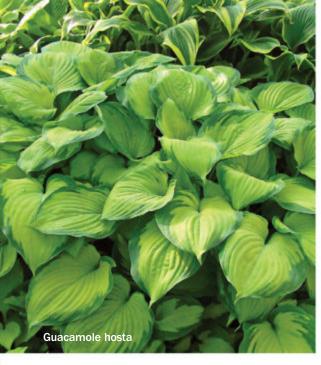


Have a Heart

Warning: Things are about to get sappy.

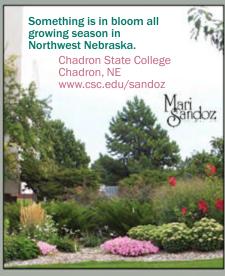
Love is definitely in the air when you have these heart-shaped blooms and leaves in your garden. In honor of Valentine's Day, we're taking a little inspiration from nature. We encourage you to seek out some of these heart shapes, and then plant them for a special person in your life—a significant other, good friend or even a grandchild. Then every time you see the hearts, you'll be reminded of their love. Awww!

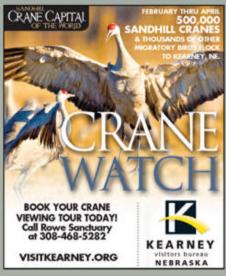
















Canada's Bird-Watching Hot Spots The proving have amaz

The provinces and territories have amazing avian habitats.

Manitoba







YELLOW WARBLER, POINT PELEE NATIONAL PARK



BLACK GUILLEMOTS, NOVA SCOTIA

1.GEORGE C. REIFEL MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

Delta, British Columbia

Highlights of this area include up to a million western sandpipers in spring and fall and wintering lesser snow geese that arrive in early October. The sanctuary offers several walkways, trails and "bird blinds" for prime bird viewing.

2. BEAVERHILL LAKE HERITAGE RANGELAND

Edmonton, Alberta

Recognized for its wetlands and as a Canadian Important Bird Area, Beaverhill Lake boasts diverse bird populations. About 145 bird species have been known to breed there. If you're nearby, stop at Beaverhill Bird Observatory for special events.

3. RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK Wasagaming,

Wasagaming, Manitoba

Several habitats make up this park—boreal and hardwood forests and prairie grasslands. Expect to see great gray owls and spruce grouse. It's a year-round park, but summer is a great time to see lots of Connecticut warblers.

4. POINT PELEE NATIONAL PARK

Leamington, Ontario

Called "The Warbler Capital of Canada," 42 of 52 warbler species have been recorded here. This park is an important migration stop for many songbirds and hawks in both spring and fall. It draws about 300,000 visitors each year.

5. BIRD ISLAND IMPORTANT BIRD AREA Cane Breton

Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Bird Island, actually two islands, offers great views of nesting birds such as great cormorants, Atlantic puffins, razorbills and black guillemots. Book a boat tour to head to the islands to see these awesome breeding birds.



Provincial Birds of Canada

Alberta –
Great horned owl
British Columbia –
Steller's jay
Manitoba –
Great gray owl
New Brunswick –
Black-capped chickadee
Newfoundland & Labrador –

Osprey
Ontario Common loon
Prince Edward Island Blue jay
Quebec Snowy owl
Saskatchewan Sharp-tailed grouse

Nova Scotia -

DID YOU KNOW? Canada doesn't have a national bird. What do you think it should be?

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Atlantic puffin

Songbirds

Seasons

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with interchangeable seasonal

plaques and a PERSONALIZED

Collection as described in this announcement. Limit: one per order. Please Respond Promptly Please indicate below the family name that will appear on the plaque. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY Signature Mrs. Mr. Ms Name (Please Print Clearly) Address City Welcome family and friends State 902726-R78983 *Plus \$7.99 shipping and service per piece. A limited-edition restricted to 295 casting days. Allow 4-8 weeks after initial payment for shipment. All sales are subject to product availability and order acceptance. **Psy only a one-time shipping and service charge of \$8.99 for the custom "Welcome" display, which is shipped after Edition One. wall display!

RESERVATION APPLICATION

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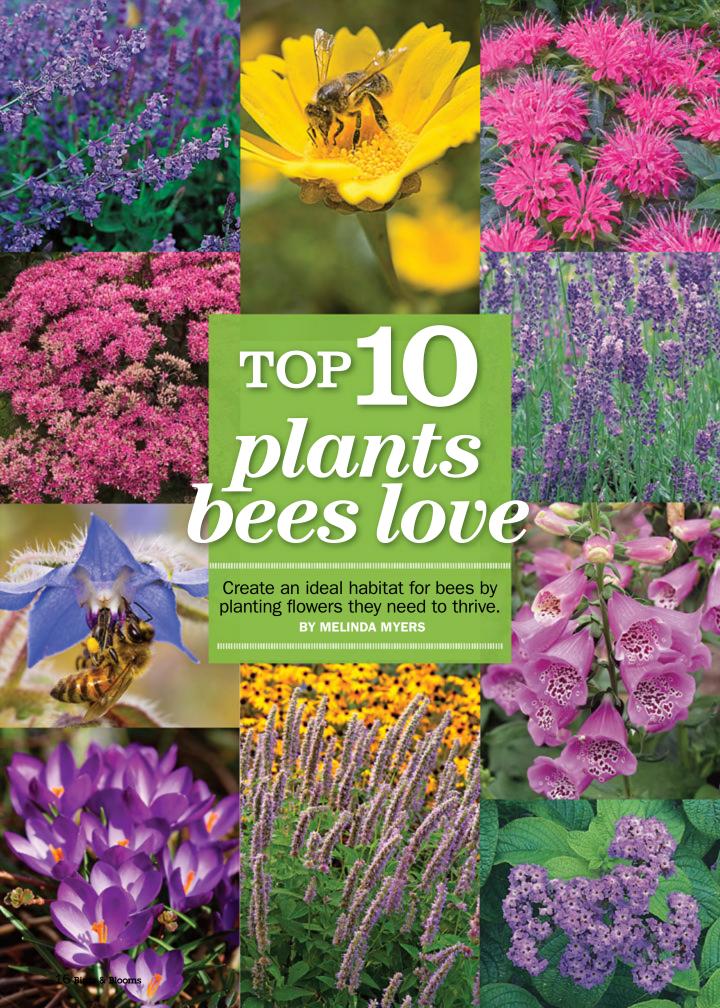


Slip into the warm, cushy comfort of these forgiving knit boots and free aching, swollen feet from pain & discomfort. Lined in plush pile with miracle memory foam insoles to soothe every step you take. Offers a perfect customized fit with stylish overall Nordic knit design and fur-look trim at ankles. Secure non-skid safety soles are ideal for indoor/outdoor use. Fashion import of polyester.

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TOP 10

- 1 CATMINT
- 2 CALENDULA
- 3 BEE BALM
- 4 SEDUM
- **5** LAVENDER
- **6** BORAGE
- 7 FOXGLOVE
- 8 CROCUS
- 9 ANISE HYSSOP
- **10** HELIOTROPE

Bees are extremely important insects that pollinate many of our favorite edibles and ornamentals. Native plants are always a great choice for attracting native bees, but many ornamental flowers will also help feed and support the bee population. So when you're selecting plants, be sure to choose those that bloom at various times throughout your growing season. This will ensure that bees have a reason to return to your backyard month after month.



Catmint

NEPETA X FAASSENII, ZONES 3 TO 8

Don't let the name sway you from planting this bee favorite. Look for well-behaved varieties that do not reseed and take over the garden. You and the bees will be rewarded with blue flowers that top silvery foliage all season long.

Why we love it: One haircut midseason will keep this heat-and drought-tolerant plant looking its best throughout the growing season.





Calendula

CALENDULA OFFICINALIS, ANNUAL

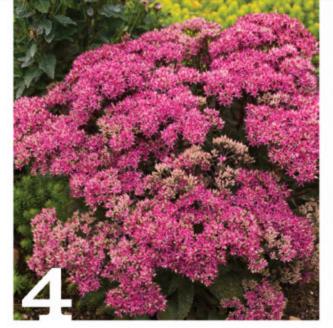
You may also know this edible flower as pot marigold. The yellowish white and orange petals were once used to flavor soups and stews. Grow in full sun with moist, well-drained soil. It thrives in cooler temperatures. Why we love it: This plant reseeds providing years of beauty and nectar in the garden.

⋖Bee balm

MONARDA, ZONES 4 TO 9

A list like this would not be complete without bee balm. It is a favorite of not only bees but also hummingbirds and butterflies. This vigorous plant reseeds readily, but the fragrant leaves provide a bit of aromatherapy when thinning in spring.

Why we love it: The leaves of this North American native plant can be steeped to make tea.



▲ Sedum

SEDUM, ZONES 3 TO 10

Planting both summer and fall blooming varieties will appeal to more bees and you'll get season-long blooms. Grow these heat and drought tolerant plants in full sun for best results. There are lots of varieties out there, so select one that best suits your garden design.

Why we love it: There are so many options from ground-hugging varieties great for ground covers to more upright types for perennial and mixed borders.



▲ Borage

BORAGO OFFICINALIS, ANNUAL

The clear blue star-shaped flowers of borage stand out in the garden. You can eat the cucumber-flavored leaves raw, steamed or sautéed. This annual self-seeds, so it will be a long lasting member of the garden. And you will have plenty of seedlings to share with family and friends!

Why we love it: Once it's established it is a droughttolerant annual.



▲ Lavender

LAVANDULA ANGUSTIFOLIA, ZONES 5 TO 8

Full sun and well-drained soil are keys to successfully growing lavender. One of its appeals: The leaves and flowers are fragrant. Lavender's silvery leaves will persist in mild winters adding to the winter garden's beauty. Plant hardier varieties, like Hidcote and Munstead, in zone 5 and even 4.

Why we love it: Bonus! Deer and rabbits tend to leave this plant alone.



▲ Foxglove

DIGITALIS PURPUREA, ZONES 4 TO 9

Spires of large bell-shaped flowers add vertical interest to the late spring or early summer garden. Foxglove is a great option for those gardeners with shady spaces and moist, organic soils.

Why we love it: Though a biennial, foxglove reseeds and tends to stay in the garden for years. If you want to enjoy these stunners every year, plant them two years in a row.

18 Birds & Blooms birdsandblooms.com



When a kiss may turn into more than a kiss

Over time, **ESTRING®** (**estradiol vaginal ring**) **2 mg** may provide relief for many women who experience painful sex after menopause.



Painful urination, vaginal dryness, itching, burning, and even painful sexual intercourse are not uncommon after menopause due to vaginal atrophy. But that doesn't mean you have to stop sexual activity before it starts. **ESTRING** offers many women relief from painful intercourse.

ESTRING is a soft, flexible vaginal ring that gives you a steady, low dose of estrogen for 90 days. For many women, it offers the relief they're looking for.

When a kiss turns into more than a kiss, don't give up. **ESTRING** may help make intercourse less painful.

ESTRING is a local estrogen therapy used after menopause to treat moderate-to-severe menopausal changes in and around the vagina. ESTRING PROVIDES RELIEF OF LOCAL SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE ONLY.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Using estrogen alone may increase your chance of getting cancer of the uterus (womb). Report any unusual vaginal bleeding right away while you are using ESTRING. Vaginal bleeding after menopause may be a warning sign of cancer of the uterus (womb). Your healthcare provider should check any unusual vaginal bleeding to find out the cause.

Do not use estrogens, with or without progestins, to prevent heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, or dementia (decline in brain function).

Using estrogen alone may increase your chances of getting strokes or blood clots. Using estrogens with progestins may increase your chances of getting heart attacks, strokes, breast cancer, or blood clots.

Using estrogens, with or without progestins, may increase your chance of getting dementia, based on a study of women 65 years of age or older.

Estrogens should be used at the lowest dose possible, only for as long as needed. You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly about whether you still need treatment.

ESTRING should be removed after 90 days of continued use. If continuation of therapy is indicated, the flexible ring should be replaced. You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly about whether you still need treatment with ESTRING to control these problems.

Do not use ESTRING if you have unusual vaginal bleeding, have or have had cancer of the breast or uterus, had a stroke or heart attack, have

or have had blood clots or liver problems, have a bleeding disorder, are allergic to any of its ingredients, or think you may be pregnant.

Estrogens increase the risk of gallbladder disease. Discontinue estrogen if loss of vision, pancreatitis, or liver problems occur. If you take thyroid medication, consult your healthcare provider, as use of estrogens may change the amount needed.

The most frequently reported side effects are headaches, increased vaginal secretions, vaginal discomfort, abdominal pain, and genital itching.

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following warning signs: breast lumps, unusual vaginal bleeding, dizziness and faintness, changes in speech, severe headaches, chest pain, shortness of breath, pain in your legs, or changes in vision.

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ESTRING® (estradiol vaginal ring)

About ESTRING

ESTRING (estradiol vaginal ring) is an off-white, soft, flexible ring with a center that contains 2 mg of estradiol (an estrogen hormone). ESTRING releases estradiol into the vagina in a consistent, stable manner for 90 days. The soft, flexible ring is placed in the upper third of the vagina (by the physician or the patient). ESTRING should be removed after 90 days of continuous use. If continuation of therapy is indicated, the flexible ring should be replaced. ESTRING is used after menopause to treat moderate to severe menopausal changes in and around the vagina. You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly about whether you still need treatment with ESTRING to control these problems.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about ESTRING (an estrogen hormone)?

- Using estrogen alone may increase your chance of getting cancer of the uterus (womb). Report any unusual vaginal bleeding right away while you are using ESTRING. Vaginal bleeding after menopause may be a warning sign of cancer of the uterus (womb). Your healthcare provider should check any unusual vaginal bleeding to find out the cause.
- Do not use estrogen alone or estrogens with progestin to prevent heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, or dementia (decline in brain function). Using estrogen alone may increase your chance of getting dementia, based on a study of women 65 years of age or older.
- Using estrogen alone may increase your chances of getting strokes or blood clots.
- Using estrogens with progestins may increase your chance of getting heart attacks, strokes, breast cancer, or blood clots.
- Using estrogens alone or combined with progestins may increase your chance of getting dementia, based on a study of women 65 years of age or older.
- You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly about whether you still need treatment with ESTRING.

Who should not use ESTRING? Do not start using ESTRING if you:

- Have unusual vaginal bleeding
- Currently have or have had certain cancers. Estrogens may increase the chance of getting certain types of cancers, including cancer of the breast or uterus. If you have or had cancer, talk with your healthcare provider about whether you should use ESTRING.
- Had a stroke or heart attack
- Currently have or have had blood clots
- Currently have or have had liver problems
- Have been diagnosed with a bleeding disorder
- Are allergic to ESTRING or any of its ingredients. See the list of ingredients in ESTRING in the leaflet.
- Think you may be pregnant

What should I tell my healthcare provider before I use ESTRING? Before you use ESTRING, tell your healthcare provider:

- · If you have any unusual vaginal bleeding
- About all your medical problems. Your healthcare provider may need to check you more carefully if you have certain conditions, such as asthma (wheezing), epilepsy (seizures), diabetes, migraine, endometriosis, lupus, angioedema (swelling of face and tongue), or problems with your heart, liver, thyroid, kidneys, or have high calcium levels in your blood
- If you are going to have surgery or will be on bed rest
- If you are breast feeding
- About all the medicines you take including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines may affect how ESTRING works. ESTRING may also affect how your other medicines work.

What are the possible side effects of ESTRING? If you experience any of the following side effects, immediately remove ESTRING if possible and contact your healthcare provider:

- Cases of toxic shock syndrome (TSS) have been reported in women using vaginal rings. Toxic shock syndrome is a rare but serious illness caused by a bacterial infection. Symptoms of TSS include fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, dizziness, faintness, or a sunburn-like rash on face and body.
- Cases of the vaginal ring becoming attached to the vaginal wall, making ring removal difficult, have been reported.
- Cases of bowel obstruction have been reported.
- Severe allergic reactions have been reported including skin rash, giant hives, swelling of the eyelids, face, lips, tongue or throat.

The most frequently reported side effect with ESTRING use is increased vaginal secretions. Many of these vaginal secretions are like those that occur normally prior to menopause and indicate that ESTRING is working. Vaginal secretions that are associated with a bad odor, vaginal itching, or other signs of vaginal infection are NOT normal and may indicate a risk or a cause for concern. Other side effects may include vaginal discomfort, abdominal pain, or genital itching.

What are the possible side effects of estrogens? Side effects are grouped by how serious they are and how often they happen when you are treated.

Serious, but less common side effects include:

- Heart attack
- Stroke
- · Blood clots
- Dementia
- Breast cancer
- Cancer of the lining of the uterus
- · Ovarian cancer

- · High blood pressure
 - High blood sugar
 - · Gallbladder disease
 - Liver problems
 - Changes in your thyroid hormone levels
 - Enlargement of benign tumors of the uterus ("fibroids")

Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following warning signs or any other unusual symptoms that concern you:

- New breast lumps
- Unusual vaginal bleeding
- . Changes in vision or speech
- · Severe headaches
- · Severe pains in your chest or legs with or without shortness of breath, weakness and fatigue
- · Memory loss or confusion

Less serious, but common side effects include:

- Headache
- · Breast pain
- Irregular vaginal bleeding or spotting
- Stomach or abdominal cramps, bloating
- · Nausea and vomiting
- Fluid retention
- · Vaginal yeast infection

These are not all the possible side effects of ESTRING. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for advice about side effects. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or to Pfizer at 1-800-438-1985.

What can I do to lower my chances of getting a serious side effect with ESTRING?

- · Follow carefully the instructions for use.
- Talk with your healthcare provider regularly about whether you should continue using ESTRING.
- See your healthcare provider right away if you get vaginal bleeding while using ESTRING.
- If you have fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, dizziness, faintness, or a sunburn-like rash on face and body, remove ESTRING and contact your healthcare provider.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you have difficulty removing the vaginal ring.

ESTRING is a local estrogen therapy used after menopause to treat moderate to severe menopausal changes in and around the vagina. ESTRING PROVIDES RELIEF OF LOCAL SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE ONLY.

Estrogens should be used only as long as needed. You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly (for example, every 3 to 6 months) about whether you still need treatment with ESTRING.

ESTRING INSERTION ESTRING can be inserted and removed by you, your doctor, or healthcare provider. To insert ESTRING yourself, choose the position that is most comfortable for you: standing with one leg up, squatting, or lying down.

- 1. After washing and drying your hands, remove ESTRING from its pouch using the tear-off notch on the side.
- 2. Hold ESTRING between your thumb and index finger and press the opposite sides of the ring together.
- 3. Gently push the compressed ring into your vagina as far as you can.

ESTRING PLACEMENT When ESTRING is in place, you should not feel anything. If you feel uncomfortable, ESTRING is probably not far enough inside. Use your finger to gently push ESTRING further into your vagina.

ESTRING DRUG DELIVERY Once in the vagina, ESTRING begins to release estradiol immediately. ESTRING will continue to release a low, continuous dose of estradiol for the full 90 days it remains in place.

It will take about 2 to 3 weeks to restore the tissue of the vagina and urinary tract to a healthier condition and to feel the full effect of ESTRING in relieving vaginal and urinary symptoms.

ESTRING REMOVAL After 90 days there will no longer be enough estradiol in the ring to maintain its full effect in relieving your vaginal or urinary symptoms. ESTRING should be removed at that time and replaced with a new ESTRING, if your doctor determines that you need to continue your therapy.

To remove ESTRING:

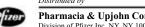
- 1. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
- 2. Assume a comfortable position, either standing with one leg up, squatting, or lying down.
- 3. Loop your finger through the ring and gently pull it out.
- 4. Discard the used ring in a waste receptacle. (Do not flush ESTRING.)

If you have any additional questions about removing ESTRING, contact your doctor or healthcare provider.

LAB-0087-6 0 Revised November 2014 ETP700802-01

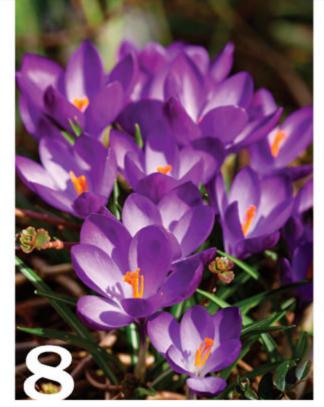
Need help paying for your Pfizer medicines? Pfizer RxPathways* is here to help.











▲ Crocus CROCUS, ZONES 3 TO 8

Start off spring with a burst of color in the landscape and nectar for the bees. Grow these small early bloomers in full sun or partial shade. Planting crocus in bulk will make an even greater impact in the garden. Why we love it: There are cultivars that squirrels tend to leave alone. Try Little Tommies (Crocus tommasinianus) if you've had trouble with squirrels digging up your bulbs in the past.



Heliotrope

HELIOTROPIUM ARBORESCENS, ZONES 10 & 11, ANNUAL ELSEWHERE

Fragrant purple, violet or white flowers will attract bees, but you'll enjoy the lovely fragrance in the landscape as well. Grow these annuals in the garden or a container in full sun and moist well-drained soil.

Why we love it: Potted plants or those started from cuttings late in the season can be overwintered indoors.



Anise hyssop

AGASTACHE FOENICULUM, ZONES 4 TO 8

This North American native produces spikes of blue flowers above anise-scented leaves in late summer. The plants grow 3 feet tall, self-seed and tolerate drought once they're established. Be sure to deadhead to encourage more blooms.

Why we love it: Anise hyssop will also attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

flower photo contest

This year we are teaming up with the Chicago Flower Show for their annual flower photo contest. Here's how you can win.

- 1. Dig up one of those gorgeous flower images you have sitting around.
- 2. Submit the image by early February.
- 3. Make plans to see all the finalists at the Chicago Flower Show, March 14-22 at Navy Pier. By the way, our own Melinda Myers will be speaking at the show March 18. Stop by and say hello!

Learn more at birdsandblooms.com/flowercontest.



Melinda Myers is the horticulture expert for Birds & Blooms. She's planning to do her part to add bee-friendly blooms to her yard this year.



For more nectar-filled plants bees and hummingbirds love, visit birdsandblooms.com/flowersforhummingbirds.

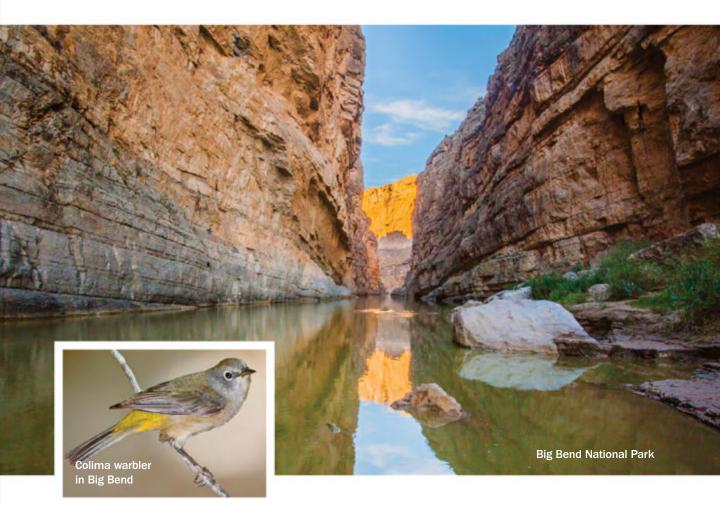
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Birding the Fantastic sightings are nearly guaranteed when you plan your trip around these magnificent destinations By Ken Keffer National Parks

S

ince the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, the federal government has preserved some of the continent's most spectacular scenery for the enjoyment of all. With this amazing backdrop of unique habitats, it's not surprising that our national parks are also top birding destinations. Let's explore some of the best of the best.





Big Bend National Park, TEXAS

With more than 450 documented bird species, Big Bend has recorded more than any other national park. This generous expanse of west Texas covers a wide range of habitats from the banks of the Rio Grande to the rugged Chisos Mountains.

The Colima warbler is a bird that is more common in Mexico, but a few can be found in the mountains of Big Bend. It's the only place north of the border that the Colima warbler can be found. Other Southwestern species include the hepatic tanager, painted redstart, Scott's oriole and Mexican jay. Big Bend is also a good place to look for hummingbirds, including the rare Lucifer hummingbird, found more regularly here than anywhere else in the U.S.

Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks, wyoming

As a Wyoming native, I've always had great pride in Yellowstone and neighboring Grand Teton. When I hear the hoarse squawks of the Clark's nutcracker, I imagine what it was like for the early explorers of the area.

You'll spot plenty of other creatures with the

birds. A couple of my favorite viewing spots are Fishing Bridge and Two Ocean Lake. From the bridge, watch for American white pelicans, river otters, or maybe even a grizzly bear looking to make a snack out of the native cutthroat trout. Another big white bird on the waters of northwest Wyoming is the trumpeter swan, often nesting on Two Ocean Lake. In winter, the swan population grows as migratory birds join the individuals that remain in the region year-round. Fires are an important part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, and I'm always excited to spot woodpeckers and fireweed in areas that were once burned over.

Everglades National Park, FLORIDA

In this vast wetland, mangrove thickets rim freshwater sawgrass prairies, which open out into the salty Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. It's a park best viewed from the water, even if all you have time for is an afternoon paddle. Hiking trails and boardwalks also allow visitors to get prime views of the many species of wading birds.

Look for flocks of white ibis foraging in the shallow waters, their long bills probing the mud.

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You can also find rare wood storks balancing awkwardly in treetops. Roseate spoonbills look unworldly with their pink feathers and spatulate bills. Anhingas sit drying their wings on nearly every available perch. Visitors can also expect to find alligators sunning themselves at water's edge, so watch where you step.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park,

TENNESSEE AND NORTH CAROLINA

Tucked along the mountains, Great Smoky has more human visitors than any other national park in America. It's also a popular place for birds and critters. For plants, this is one of the most diverse places on the continent, boasting 100 native tree species and 1,500 kinds of flowering plants.

The park is at a crossroads for birds. Southern species can be spotted in the lowlands, while birds





more common in the North inhabit the higher elevations. For example, both Carolina and black-capped chickadees live here. Other Southern highlights include yellow-throated vireos, hooded warblers and Louisiana waterthrush, while Northern birds rare in other parts of the South include goldencrowned kinglets, veery, winter wren, northern sawwhet owls, and black-throated blue, blackburnian, chestnut-sided and Canada warblers.

Great Smoky Mountains

National Park

Acadia National Park, MAINE

This expanse of coastal Maine was the country's first Eastern national park. Whether by car, carriage, bus, bike or boat, it's worth exploring fully. The scenic vistas along the rugged North Atlantic are impressive enough, but the backdrop of Acadia includes Cadillac Mountain, the highest point on the East Coast.

Nearly two dozen species of warbler have nested in Acadia. Peregrine falcons nest along the rugged cliffs of Precipice Trail, and this is also a noted raptor migration site. Waterfowl include scoters, eiders and guillemots, which congregate during the winter. Be sure to check out the Wild Gardens of Acadia, too, where the diverse plant life can be really active with birds.

If you find yourself in Acadia in late May, look for B&B birding expert Kenn Kaufman. He'll be the keynote speaker at the annual Acadia Birding Festival.

Point Pelee National Park, ontario

One of the smallest national parks in Ontario, Point Pelee, at the southernmost tip of Canada, is of critical importance to birds. A peninsula jutting into Lake Erie, it's like an airport landing strip for many migrating species.

An impressive array of shorebirds, warblers and thrushes move through the park each year. You can also see scarlet tanagers, blue jays and both Baltimore and orchard orioles in good numbers during migration. The area hosts great movements of raptors, too. Some species, like northern harriers, osprey and peregrine falcons, will eventually fly across Lake Erie, but broad-winged, red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks tend to avoid flying over open water. They will generally follow the coast along the western shores of Lake Erie on their southern migration.

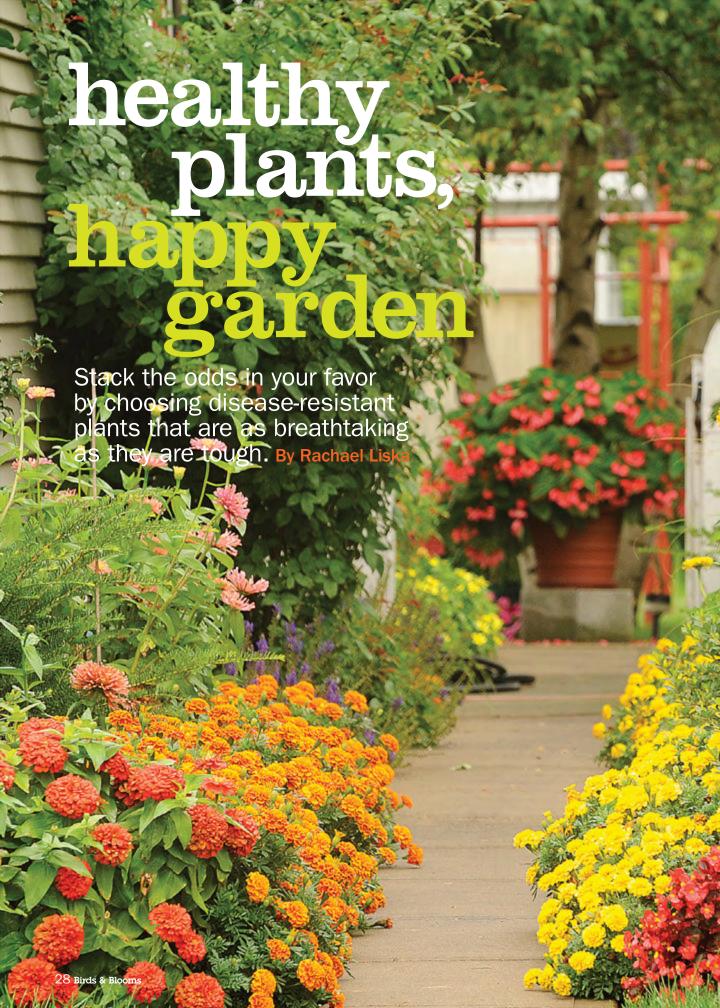
With 59 national parks in the U.S. and almost as many in Canada, you could argue that every one of them is a worthy birding destination. So get out there and explore them. You'll be rewarded with gorgeous scenery, unique habitats and some of the best birding around.

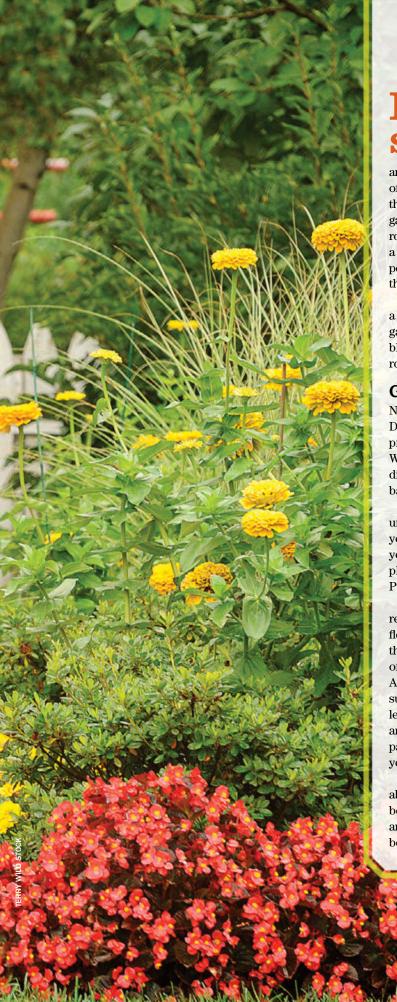


Ken Keffer enjoyed conquering the 3 Dunes Challenge while looking for birds at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore last summer.









It's early spring,

and you find yourself wandering the aisles of your favorite nursery in hopes of replacing that sickly rosebush you pulled from the garden late last fall. That's when you see it: a robust beauty with emerald-green foliage and a bounty of bright pink blooms. It's picture-perfect. You buy it, plant it and pat yourself on the back for selecting such a fine specimen.

Fast-forward to a beautiful summer day a few months later. You're weeding the garden. And that's when you see them: black spots covering your once-perfect rosebush. Oh, no, not again!

Good Green for Your Green

Now, if you'd planted a Knock Out, New Dawn or Livin' Easy rose instead, you probably wouldn't be in this predicament. Why those? Because those cultivars are disease-resistant, friend. That means no baby-sitting and no black spots.

Selecting disease-resistant plants is undoubtedly one of the smartest things you can do when planning or freshening up your garden. Janna Beckerman, extension plant pathologist and associate professor at Purdue University, explains why.

"Plants are selected for a variety of reasons," she says. "Unique flower color, floriferousness and the ability to rebloom are the most obvious. Yet another important but often overlooked trait is disease resistance. A disease-resistant plant is naturally less susceptible to pesky diseases and fungi like leaf spot, blight, gray mold, powdery mildew and rust. These plants are an investment that pays for itself. It also allows you to minimize your use of pesticides."

So what plants tend to be the most vulnerable to disease? "Crabapple, roses, azalea, boxwood, hollyhock, peony, phlox, bee balm, annual and perennial geranium, impatiens, begonia—I could keeping going," Janna says.



Disease-Resistant Dynamos

- 1. Aster, New England Harrington's Pink, Honeysong Pink, Purple Dome
- 2. Azalea Darlin's Dream, Flame Creeper, Sautee Sunset
- **3. Bee Balm –** Jacob Cline, **Pardon-My-Pink**, Gardenview Scarlet
- **4. Begonia –** Duarten, Marion Louise, Pauline, Peace, **Vesuvius**
- **5. Geranium, Perennial** Alan Bloom, Buxton's Blue, Biokovo, **Rozanne**
- 6. Impatiens Bounce, New Guinea
- 7. Peony America, Sarah Bernhardt, Scarlet O'Hara
- 8. Phlox, Garden David, Laura, Robert Poore
- 9. Rose Blaze of Glory, Golden Showers, Heart Song, Knock Out, Olympiad, New Dawn
- 10. Rudbeckia Cherry Brandy, Tiger Eye Gold
- **11. Speedwell Icicle, Crater Lake Blue, Sightseeing**
- **12. Verbena –** Aztec Dark Red, **Coral**, Empress Strawberry, Rapunzel Lilac









Bred to Be Fighters

Plant breeders cultivate new disease-resistant offerings by selecting and crossbreeding plants with the traits they're looking for. Breeding a modest parent plant that is genetically more resistant to disease with a vivacious partner that is known for its big blooms or gorgeous color creates a new variety that boasts the best of both worlds.

Luckily for us gardeners, disease-resistant plants aren't hard to find. Many growers now market them this way, just as they do plants that attract wildlife

There's an app for that!

Purdue University has several apps designed to help the home gardener diagnose and manage disease and insect problems. Look for the Purdue Perennial Doctor, the Purdue Tree Doctor and the Purdue Annual Doctor. Download them at purdueplantdoctor.com.

or tolerate drought. If you still can't find what you're looking for, consider joining one of the many online garden forums on the subject, or check with the experts at your local extension office.

A few of Janna's personal favorites that work especially well in her neck of the woods (and should throughout the Midwest and Northeast) include Adirondack crabapple, Jacob Cline bee balm, David phlox and both the Pavement and Canadian Explorer series of roses.

There's Power in Prevention

Just as getting enough sleep and exercise help keep human bodies healthy to fight off disease, so do good gardening habits work to keep your plants strong and resilient. The truth is that no plant is 100 percent immune to all disease.

"Sometimes a variety that is resistant in one part of the country could succumb to disease in another area, where the disease pressure is worse because the climate is wetter or warmer," Janna says. "Also, evolution takes place in the garden, just as it does 1: GRAHAM RICE/GARDENPHOTOS. COM; 2: CLIVE VARLACK/THE IMAGE FINDERS INC.; 3, 5, 7, 8, 10: WALTERS GARDENS INC.; 4: GAP PHOTOS/SARAH CUTTLE; 6, 12: PROVEN WINNERS; 9: STAR ROSES AND PLANTS; 11: DOREEN L. WYNJA/MONROVIA



in the outside world, and pathogens can evolve to attack plants that previous generations of disease strains could not."

Janna also notes that geography can mean a lot. For instance, when she goes to California, she notices that the roses have rust problems not common in the Midwest—though Californians don't have to battle black spot as much.

The DOs and DON'Ts

Now that you know the benefits of disease-resistant plants, there are a few final things to consider before digging in to your flower bed. By following these simple rules, you'll be well on your way to a disease-free garden.

- DO select plants that thrive in your zone. Otherwise, stressful conditions weaken their performance and make them more susceptible to problems.
- DO plant the right plant in the right site, according to its light requirements.
- •DON'T crowd your plants, and DO maintain

good weed control. Good airflow is critical.

- DO pay attention to the plant's water requirements. Growing bee balm in a dry site makes it susceptible to powdery mildew, while growing iris in a wet area predisposes it to root rot.
- DO water in the morning when the foliage has all day to dry, and DON'T water overhead, which can splash soil—where nasty stuff lurks—onto the foliage.
- DON'T overfertilize. People view fertilizer like vitamins—something that keeps living things healthy. But too much can be a bad thing, which can actually make plants more susceptible to disease.



Rachael Liska is a freelance writer and editor. This season she's hoisting the white flag, pulling out her old phlox and taking Janna's advice to plant a powdery mildew-resistant variety in its place.

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Extraordinary Behaviors of Common Birds

Northern cardinals have a strong instinct to nurture young, like this male feeding juveniles.



It's always fun to identify backyard birds, but let's take it a step further and recognize the remarkable things our feathered friends are capable of. Looking beyond the basic facts makes our birding experience much richer. So here's a deeper dive into what makes birds such fascinating creatures! By Laura Erickson

The body temperature of black-capped chickadees can



Nature vs. Nurture

Eastern screech-owls are fierce little predators, unless their nurturing instinct gets in the way of their aggressive nature. In 1922, one observer reported that after a screech-owl's eggs were destroyed, it repeatedly entered a flicker nest for five days. The little owl brooded the nestling flickers and tried to feed them. Meanwhile, the parent flickers continued to provide proper care for their chicks.

Cardinals have a well-developed urge to nurture, too-or at least one in North Carolina did. Researchers speculate that a northern cardinal lost his young just when his hormonal drive to feed chicks was at its peak. He was carrying insects in his beak, searching for a cardinal chick to feed, when he discovered a goldfish on the edge of a backyard pool, its mouth roughly the size of a baby cardinal's—so he stuffed some food in. For several days he'd find a beakful of food, fly in and call from a nearby fence, and seven goldfish would crowd the edge of the pool to be fed. Pushing food into their mouths relieved his need to feed gaping orange mouths, and the goldfish seemed satisfied as well.

We know that migratory birds understand latitude, heading south in fall and north again in spring. But they also have a sense of where they are in terms of longitude. How do we know this? In the winter of 1961-'62. scientists performed an experiment with white-crowned and golden-crowned sparrows in the San Jose, California, area. Individuals of both species establish a wintering territory during their very first winter. Then they return to that spot faithfully, year after year.

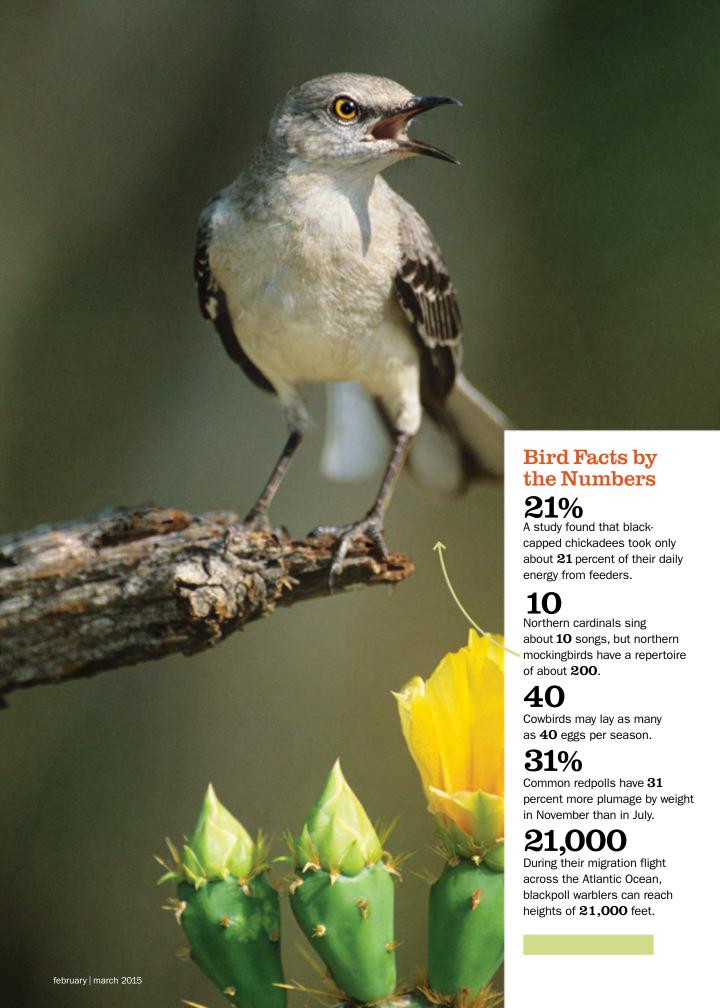
The scientists captured and banded 411 of these sparrows and flew them by airplane to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1,800 miles southeast, for release. The next winter, 26 of them returned to San Jose. Next, the scientists captured 660 sparrows (including 22 of the birds that had already returned from Baton Rouge) and flew them to Laurel, Maryland, 2,400 miles east. The following winter, 15 of these birds returned to San Jose, including six individuals that had made the trip from Baton Rouge the previous year!

Adjusting to Low Temperatures

To survive winter, most birds grow lots of new feathers every fall. A female white-throated sparrow has about 1,500 feathers in October but over 2,700 in February. Those added feathers provide lots of insulation.

Besides adding feathers, though, birds such as blackcapped chickadees turn down the thermostat. By day, a chickadee's body temperature is about 108 degrees. But on cold nights, that temperature can drop more than 20

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degrees. First thing in the morning in winter, chickadees start shivering furiously. The muscle activity heats their body core back up to 108. Shivering requires additional energy, so chickadees must eat immediately to start their day. The chickadees that visit your yard at first light are counting on your feeders, but they have a backup just in case: They store food for times when favorite sources are depleted or bad weather keeps them away.

Remembering Food Sources

Chickadees, jays and other birds store food for when they need it most. How do they remember where they put it? Having an extraordinary spatial memory is only half the story.

Whether you're a human or a bird, every long-term memory is permanently stored on a neuron. Once a neuron holds a memory, it can't erase it to store a new memory. So why are chickadees masters at memorizing where they hide their seeds? Medical researchers and ornithologists have discovered that every autumn, neurons in a chickadee's brain die, to be replaced with new neurons. Wild chickadees, with a lot of worthless

memories and a great need to store new ones, replace a great many neurons, while captive chickadees with lives that stay the same from day to day replace very few. Researchers hope that studying chickadee brains will help us figure out how to help humans with brain injuries or diseases.

White-throated sparrows need insulation in winter, so their number of feathers increases by

Forming Lifelong Bonds—Or Not

Most birds do not mate for life, and most of those that do aren't quite as faithful as we'd like to think. Over 92 percent of all bird species form a pair bond and stay together for at least part of the nesting cycle. Yet DNA tests of baby birds have shown that in over 75 percent of these species, some birds have mated with one or more birds other than their "social mate."

Some birds do bond for life, some for weeks or months. But with hummingbirds, it's only minutes! Males have no role in building a nest, incubating eggs or raising young.

On the other end of the spectrum are bald eagles. They mate for life, but possibly only because they can't work out a property settlement. Eagles don't stay together over winter, preferring separate vacations. The pair returns to the same nest each year, which can grow almost 9 feet wide. However, if one or the other doesn't come back, the remaining bird readily accepts a new mate at the nest.

Once you learn a bird's name, don't just check it off. Record when it arrives in spring, take note of the birds it hangs out with, watch its young grow, and observe how its behaviors change in different seasons. Looking for these habits will add another element of wonder to your backyard bird-watching.



Laura Erickson, former science editor at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, has written seven books about birds.

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glad you asked!

Kenn and Kimberly Kaufman answer your birding questions while Melinda Myers tackles gardening.







glad you asked!



What is the name of this vine?

Michael Hardy GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Melinda: This is a white-flowered clematis. The flower size, bloom time and growth habit will help you narrow it down to the exact type. Clematis performs best in full sun and cool, moist soil. Mulching the soil or growing ground covers around the base of the plant will help shade the soil, keeping the roots cool and moist.



When I got out my pots from last fall, tons of little bugs with wings covered the old soil. Can I reuse the soil?

Suzanne Foote CAYUGA, NEW YORK

Melinda: In general it's best not to save and reuse potting mix when the soil or plants are infested with insects or infected with disease. So discard that soil and clean the pots before you use them again. Dip each pot in a solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. Then rinse in clear water and they'll be ready for fresh soil and new plants!

What should I do to keep house sparrows from tormenting wrens and bluebirds? Should I take the birdhouses down and quit feeding the birds altogether?

Ruth Armstrong NILES, MICHIGAN

Kenn and Kimberly: If you feed birds or install nest boxes on your property, chances are you'll attract house sparrows. These aggressive, non-native cavity nesters wreak havoc on native species. To discourage house sparrows from gobbling up all the food at your feeders, try eliminating some of their favorites, such as cracked corn and millet. Since house sparrows prefer to feed on the ground or on more open feeders and are somewhat less adept at clinging than other birds, offer thistle seed in a sock feeder, safflower seed in a tube feeder with short perches, or both.

Keeping house sparrows out of nest boxes is part of being a responsible bird landlord. There are several ways to discourage them from using nest boxes, ranging from boxes specifically designed to dissuade sparrows to traps to eliminate them. We encourage you to visit the North American Bluebird Society's website for more information, nabluebirdsociety.org.

BACKYARD TIP Monitor nest boxes every day. If you see evidence of house sparrows, discard their materials.



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I spotted a plant in my yard that I've never seen before. I had my husband mow around it so I could take a picture. Is it a weed?

Sandra Scaggs GRANITE CITY, ILLINOIS

Melinda: What a nice surprise to find grape hyacinth growing on your property. Animals usually leave these bulbs alone, but it looks like some two- or four-legged critter planted these in the grass. Some gardeners do intentionally plant these in the lawn for added spring color. Once the flowers fade you can mow high and these bulbs will return next year. Or dig them up and move them to the garden if you'd rather enjoy them there.





I was visiting my brother in Palm Desert, California, and spotted this bird, which I think is a warbler. Can you help?

Gary LeValley walla walla, washington

Kenn and Kimberly: Your bird is small and active like a warbler, but it's actually a verdin, a unique desert bird. Verdins are widespread in the desert Southwest, from California east to Texas and south into Mexico. They feed on insects and on nectar from flowers; sometimes they come to hummingbird feeders. To raise their young, they build a round, bulky nest with the entrance on the side. Verdins used to be classified in the same family as chickadees, but new research shows that their closest relatives are certain small songbirds in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Is it safe to put down plastic and red bark chips to keep weeds and grass out of my perennial garden?

Vicki Kloepping KENT, ILLINOIS

Melinda: A better idea would be to use shredded leaves, evergreen needles or wood mulch directly on the soil in your perennial garden. Plastic barriers can create short-and long-term problems in the garden. When the wood chips covering the plastic break down, they make a layer of compost. The plastic prevents the compost from improving the soil below and creates the perfect growing conditions for weed seeds to sprout and grow. Before long the plastic rips and ultimately allows weeds to grow. Plus, the torn plastic is unsightly.



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while walking along the Allegheny River last spring, I spotted a bird I have never seen in this area before. I believe it is the shorebird yellowlegs. Does it belong in our area, or was it just visiting?

Dori Montgomery

RIMERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Kenn and Kimberly: Yes, you're right on both counts: Your bird is a greater yellowlegs, and it's a shorebird, a member of the sandpiper family. Greater yellowlegs don't live in Pennsylvania at most times of the year; they spend the summer mostly in Canada and Alaska, and in winter they can be found from the Southern U.S. to South America. During spring and fall, these impressive migrants may show up at the water's edge almost anywhere, including the margins of lakes, ponds and rivers. So the one you found along the Allegheny was on its normal migratory route, but it's always exciting to spot one of these birds on its travels.



Will this Alberta spruce survive?

Janice Smalley WISCONSIN DELLS, WISCONSIN

Melinda: Yes, the plant will survive, but it may take years to regain its former beauty, if it ever does. The winter winds that typically blow in from the Northwest and winter sun from the South cause the needles of this and many evergreens to brown. The needles continue to lose moisture throughout the winter, while the frozen soil prevents the roots from absorbing water. The best thing you can do for your evergreens is water all new and existing plantings thoroughly before the ground freezes.



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window to wildlife

Basic Butterfly Behaviors

Take your butterfly gardening to the next level by learning some of their most common habits to look for. By Jill M. Staake



These two pipevine swallowtails are mating on American speedwell.

t's such a treat to see butterflies in your backyard. But it seems that almost as quickly as they flit in, they dart off again, leaving you with barely a glimpse. These fascinating fliers, however, have characteristic habits that can help you spot more of them! Here are a few things to look for when you're in butterfly territory.

Basking. Butterflies are ectotherms, which means they rely on external sources for body heat. In the morning, and throughout cooler days, they must spend time in the sun with their wings spread, raising their body temperature to roughly 85 degrees before they can fly. A few minutes of basking in the sunshine raises their temperature as much as 20 degrees above the surrounding air.

Flight patterns. Butterflies have four wings, two on each side of their body. These are connected in such a way that the wings can move independently, allowing a wide variety of flight patterns. Some species soar slowly, with only a few wing flaps, while others seem to dart in every direction at once. Experienced butterfly watchers can often identify a species from a distance just by noting the pattern of its flight.



Food sources. Most species drink nectar from flowers, but some prefer fruit juices, tree sap and even dung or carrion. Regardless of the source, they feed with their proboscis, which curls up when not in use. Butterflies extend the proboscis into the liquid, drawing it up into the body. A few also have the ability to digest pollen gathered on the proboscis, giving these species longer life spans. Butterflies also need salts



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and other nutrients, which they get by drinking from puddles or muddy spots, an activity known as puddling.

Mating. Most butterflies have only a few short weeks to mate before they die. A male finds another butterfly of the same species by sight, then determines its sex by flying close to detect chemical pheromones—a process that often makes them look like they're dancing



around each other in the air. A male and female mate by clasping the ends of their abdomens together, remaining that way for up to 12 hours so the male can be sure no competitor has a chance to fertilize "his" eggs. The female often flies off to continue feeding, which is why you'll sometimes see two butterflies seemingly stuck together as they fly by. In a day or two, the female lays her eggs one at a time on the appropriate host plant by landing and bending her abdomen up to deposit them.

Resting. Butterflies don't exactly sleep, but they do rest, usually with their wings closed. The undersides of the wings are patterned to provide excellent camouflage, allowing them to land and seemingly disappear from sight—a near-perfect way to elude predators.





Jill Staake spends her days raising and observing butterflies for a science museum in Tampa, Florida.

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bird tales

Our readers share some of their best birding stories.



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this unique sighting with fellow birders. $\mbox{\bf Cindy Parish} \ \mbox{wynne, arkansas}$

he sticks around. We love him and want to share





masked bandits

The coconut fiber lining my deck's hanging baskets seemed to deteriorate overnight, but when I discovered why, I was thrilled. Cedar waxwings were nesting nearby! The joy of watching these two through the kitchen door, as well as the anticipation of seeing a whole waxwing family, was well worth a trip to the store!

Sharon Campbell

CLIFFORD TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA

BACKYARD TIP Have nesting waxwings? Try offering natural nesting materials like plant fibers, grasses, tiny twigs, pine needles and cattail fluff.



a frequent favorite

When a late-winter blizzard and accompanying frigid temperatures hit our area last year, the weather was pretty depressing. That is, until the birds returned to my backyard feeder! This beautiful male red-bellied woodpecker is one my favorite frequent visitors, and as you can see in this action shot taken in warmer weather, he knows just where to find a free lunch.

Diane Schulman DIX HILLS, NEW YORK

Great Catch!

On my weekly lunch date with my wife, I saw a flock of cedar waxwings in the crabapple trees. This one picked a berry, flipped it up and swallowed it. It was a good catch, and I had a good catch of my own—capturing this photo in mid-flip. These birds were great fun to watch and photograph.

George Hernandez Jr. BOISE, IDAHO



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bird tales



Lunch With a Friend

When eating lunch on our deck last spring, I spied our resident male Anna's hummingbird watching me from the next-door neighbor's cherry tree. Fortunately, although he moved around a lot, he stuck around for me to get my camera and perched where I had a good view of him. His bright colors are spectacular against the white cherry blossoms.

Ken Grant PORTLAND, OREGON

warbler in a wink

After an uneventful afternoon attempting to photograph the northern flickers in a farm field, I decided to head home. Just as I was about to duck under the barbed wire fence, this palm warbler landed not 10 feet from me. I had enough time to snap this close-up before it flew off. This moment made my whole day.

Ralph Bischoff HOMOSASSA, FLORIDA



Nature's Tiny Pruners

Much to my chagrin, I discovered house finches, sparrows and cardinals all eating my ornamental plum blossoms! Concerned for the health of my fruit trees and the animals they support, I researched the topic. It seems this is common, especially in spring when food sources are still limited. And it rarely harms the trees. In fact, by weeding out some blooms, the birds enable remaining blossoms to produce larger, more robust fruit.

Beth Diggs WAKE FOREST, NORTH CAROLINA



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bird tales

colorful customers

Last winter, my backyard was busier than ever before! Check out this snapshot of colorful customers—American goldfinches, house finches and an eastern bluebird—hanging out at the local watering hole.

Beth Willis SUGAR HILL, GEORGIA





Hungry Hummingbirds

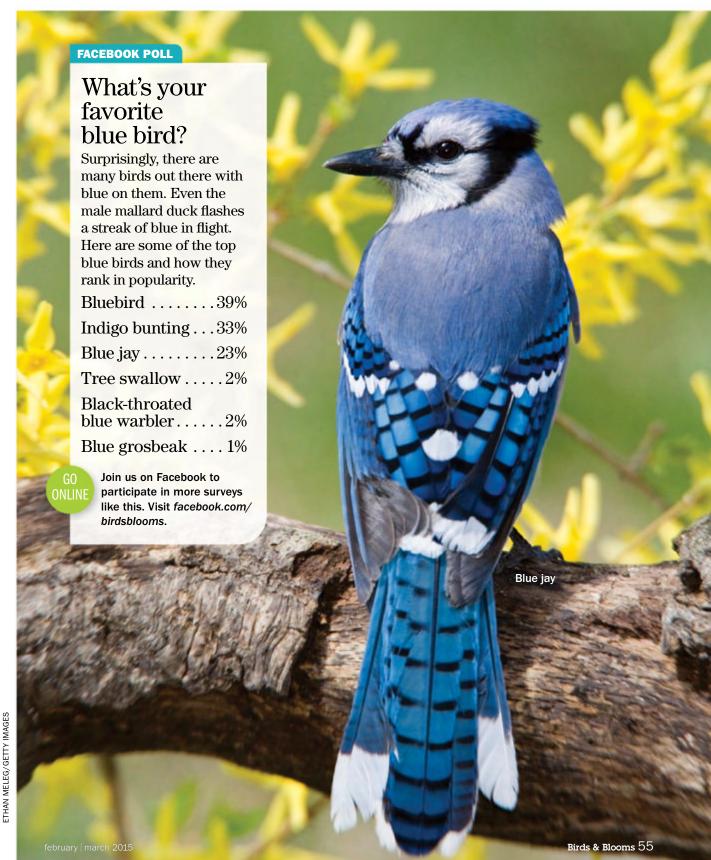
While visiting my mother in Campbell, California, I went out on the deck of her 11th-floor apartment and was soon dive-bombed by a female Anna's hummingbird! My mother had taken down her feeder because of high winds, but I quickly hung it back up. The frisky flyer left, then came right back with eight friends! They allowed me to get very close for pictures.

It was a wonder to see six feeding at once. Back home, our ruby-throated hummingbirds are aggressive, so you don't often see more than one or two feeding at the same time, and they show up only after mid-March. What a treat the Anna's were!

Pat Hyink ASHFORD, ALABAMA



from Dackyard READERS SHARE THEIR BEST PHOTOS & STORIES





you don't say! DO YOU HAVE A CLEVER CAPTION FOR THIS PHOTO?

Go to birdsand blooms.com/youdontsay. We'll publish some of our favorites in the next issue.

Mother May I?
Nancy Tully of E. Stroudsburg, F

Nancy Tully of E. Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania sent us this adorable photo of a killdeer chick hiding with its parent. Her caption is, "You don't see me," but how would you label it? Submit your clever ideas to us following the guidelines above.



Here are our favorites from last issue's You Don't Say:

"Honey! You are ruffling my feathers!"

Marissa Henis

"A little higher please." Suzy Shepherd

"You do have great feet." Jesse

"Oh my goodness, dear. Go clean your feathers." **Carmen Lorio**

We want to see your funny nature photo. See our Submission Guidelines on page 66.

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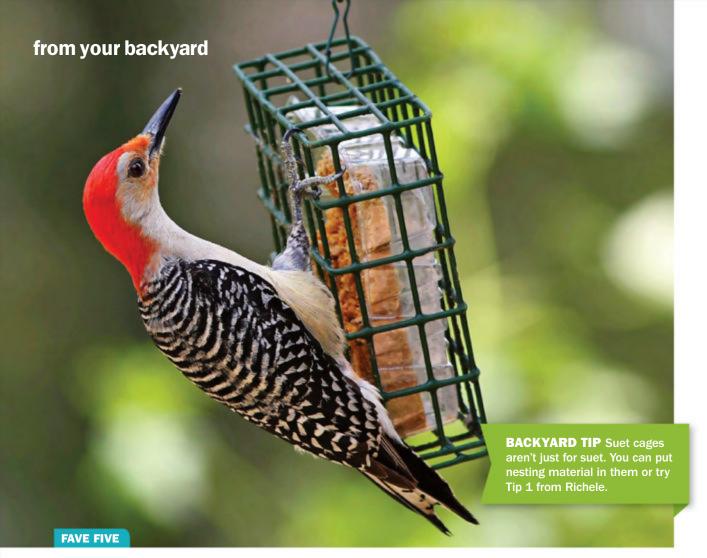


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Feeding Innovations

Try something new at your backyard feeding station with these reader ideas.

1

I place fruit slices in my suet basket. The woodpeckers enjoy the special snack, and the basket works perfectly.

Richele Herigan HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 2

Birds really enjoy hickory nuts. All you have to do is find a way to break the hickory nuts' rock-hard shells. I hold them steady using pliers, then hit them with a hammer (while wearing safety goggles) and place the broken pieces—shells and all—in my feeders. The birds pick out the meats.

Kenneth Searfoss
READING, PENNSYLVANIA

3

Pecans are a favorite of the birds in my yard. Since they're expensive, I wait until mine have lost their fresh taste. Then I put out a handful in a mesh bag and hang it from a tree limb. It doesn't take long for the birds to find their treat.

Mary Westmoreland SNYDER, TEXAS 4

When using egg whites, don't throw out the yolks. Scramble them, cool and put them in your feeder. It gives the birds extra calcium.

Nancy Spear GILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 5

I've fed birds suet blocks for many years, but a less expensive way to satisfy their suet appetite is to simply spread lard on the bark of trees. They love it, and it's a fun way to watch them.

Bruce Schaffner COCHRANE, WISCONSIN



Check out our Birdhouses and Feeders board on Pinterest for more great ideas. Go to pinterest.com/birdsblooms.



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The Youngsters

In this new series, we ask you to put your skills to the test and name the birds pictured here (sometimes we'll ask you to name blooms or butterflies, too). For this issue, we put together some spectacular reader images of fledgling birds. How many can you get right? Answers are on page 66.



▲ Autumn Ross SPIRIT LAKE, IOWA



▲ Bridget Shurtliff FALLON, NEVADA



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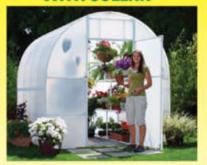
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HOMEPLACE



backyard project

A Bird for the Birds

This little birdhouse is simple, sweet and versatile! If you can find a box that matches the approximate size needed, then you'll be able to make this birdhouse almost before you can say "black-capped chickadee!" By Alison Auth

supplies

- 5-in.-square box (built, reclaimed or purchased)
- Lauan for "bird" shape
- Small finish nails
- Picture-hanging hardware or wire and 2 screws
- 1-in. butt hinge
- Screen door hook and eye
- Glue
- Exterior latex primer and paint
- Shellac or other outdoor varnish
- Bird template
- Jigsaw
- Screw gun or drill
- 1½-in. to 1½-in. hole saw
- Clamps
- Hammer
- Fine-grit sandpaper

NOTE If you are building the box, follow the instructions from step 1. If you already have a box, begin with step 6.

STEP 1. Cut one 5x5-in. square, two 5x4³/₄-in. rectangles and two 4³/₄x4¹/₂-in. rectangles out of ¹/₄-in. plywood, clear pine, shelf board, barn board or similar.

STEP 2. Glue one 5x4³/₄-in. rectangle to one 4³/₄x4¹/₂-in. rectangle. The 4³/₄-in. dimension is

the height of both rectangles. Once joined, they will form an "L" with a short side, and a longer side but both the same height. Clamp until dry. Repeat with the other 2 rectangles.

STEP 3. Glue the two L-shaped side sections to the 5-in.-square box bottom. Make sure that the sections come together to form a perfect square. Clamp until dry.

STEP 4. Once dry, reinforce the joints with small finish nails or brads.

STEP 5. Sand box with fine-grit sandpaper in preparation for painting.

CUT OUT BIRD SHAPE

STEP 6. Print out the template (at *birdsandblooms.com/birdpattern*) and cut out the bird shape.

STEP 7. Trace bird onto lauan; cut out with the jigsaw.

STEP 8. Using a hole saw attached to a screw gun or drill, bore a 1¼-in. to 1½-in. hole in the lauan. This is the bird's entrance, so be sure to place it accordingly.

STEP 9. Sand the face and edges smooth in preparation for painting.

PAINT AND ASSEMBLE

STEP 10. Prime and paint the outside of the box and bird shape, leaving the inside unpainted.

STEP 11. Hinge the bird cutout to the box using a simple 1-in. butt hinge or similar connector (see photo at top right).

STEP 12. Attach screw-eye with





hook to the back of the bird and the other screw-eye to the side of the box so that they meet when the hook closes (see photo above).

STEP 13. Seal the outside of birdhouse with several coats of shellac.

STEP 14. Attach picture-hanging hardware to the back of the box.



Alison Auth is an artist and crafter from Richmond, Virginia. She always looks to repurpose before creating something new.



HEALTH

Emily Thacker Author James Victor Publisher Jane King *Editor/Research*



Ask Emily By Emily Thacker Dear Emily: I'm allergic to perfumes, chemical smells plus many other things. Cleaning has gotten to be a problem as manufactures seem to think everything has to have a fragrance in their product. Can you recommend to me a natural way to freshen my room and air?

– B.A., Newport, PA

Dear B.A.: Vinegar is the cleaner of choice for those with allergies, asthma or a sensitivity to harsh chemicals. Cleaners you make yourself cost pennies, instead of the dollars supermarket cleaners cost. And, what is much more significant, the compounds you put together are safe, natural and easy on the environment.

I will give you my natural Fresh Air freshener from page 108 of my latest book *The Vinegar Anniversary Book*. Put the following into a pump spray bottle: 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1 tablespoon white vinegar and 2 cups of water. After the foaming stops, put on the lid and shake well. Spray this mixture into the air for instant freshness.

Hello Emily: I have a situation that I need additional guidance on and am hoping you will be able to assist me. I have a natural limestone walled shower and a natural slate shower floor. I also have very hard water that leaves behind white powdery mineral deposits that stain the stone The mineral deposits do not come up with steam, scrubbing or with natural stone cleaner. I've read many very conflicting reports on the use of vinegar on natural stone. Any suggestions, resources or insights that you can offer would be very much appreciated. Thank You, – *C. A., King of Prussia, PA*

Dear C.A.: Yes, vinegar could eventually etch the limestone and slate. And, yes it will do a very good job of removing the powdery mineral deposits in your shower. You will probably find that anything that will dissolve the mineral deposits will also dissolve the limestone, as they are both composed of the same material. You might find that a quick rinse with vinegar, followed by a thorough rinse with lots of cool water will minimize the damage it could do. You may also want to look into the benefits of a water softener to minimize the problem.

Emily Thacker is the author of over 17 books. Her best-selling books about common household products have appeared in newspapers and publications across the U.S. including USA Today, USA Weekend, Parade Magazine, The History Channel Magazine and The Saturday Evening Post.

Send Questions to: Emily Thacker C/O James Direct, Inc., 500 S. Prospect Ave., Box 980, Hartville, Ohio 44632. If interested in Emily's latest book and a FREE Special Bonus please see the articles on the next two pages titled "Vinegar, Better than Prescription Drugs?" or "Why Diet? Try Vinegar!"

ADVERTISEMENT

Vinegar, Better than Prescription Drugs?

Thousands of years ago ancient healers trusted apple cider vinegar, and modern research shows - vinegar truly is a wonder cure!

In fact, apple cider vinegar's biggest fans believe this golden liquid can help solve the most troublesome of human afflictions.

Since even the earliest of times a daily vinegar cocktail was used to help control appetite to lose weight and continue good health.

And now after years of continued research all across the globe, over 1000 new vinegar super-remedies and tonics are available in the brand new 168-page *Vinegar Anniversary Book* by famed natural health author, Emily Thacker.

From the Bible to Cleopatra to the fierce Samurai warriors of Japan, vinegar has been documented as a powerful tonic to ensure strength, power and long life.

Today's research studies and scientific reports continue to praise the healing powers of vinegar to maintain good health and well being.

Even grandma knew that her old remedies worked even if she wasn't able to explain why. And scientific research confirms this.

For instance, grandma said putting diluted vinegar in the ears would ward off infections. The American Academy of Otolaryngology's doctors – who specialize in treating infections like swimmer's ear - now recommend using a vinegar mixture as a preventative.

The Yale-New Haven hospital uses vinegar as a hospital disinfectant. When after-surgery eye infections became a problem, their Department of Bacteriology solved it with vinegar.

Food poisoning? Some doctors suggest that regular vinegar use can prevent it!

You'll get easy recipes

common household items to help: calm an upset stomach, ease leg cramps, soothe sprained muscles, control appetite to lose weight, relieve coughs, banish nausea, arthritis pain, make hiccups disappear, cool a sunburn, boost memory, reduce sore throat pain, relieve itchy skin, lower blood pressure & cholesterol, eliminate bladder infections, chase away a cold, treat burns, reduce infection, aid digestion, improve memory, soothe sore feet, treat blemishes & age spots, remove corns & calluses, replace many household

50 years ago a daily dose of an apple cider vinegar and honey tonic was used to ease arthritis. During the last 30 years or so, many wonder drugs have replaced this time-tested home remedy. Now vinegar, along with countless other old-time tonics, have new supporters including many medical professionals. The reason? Almost everybody has experienced the negative side of some of the powerful new drugs.

Strep and Staph infections? Vinegar is a powerful antiseptic and kills even these dangerous bacteria on contact.

Headaches will fade away with this simple vinegar concoction.

Feel good and look good with these hair and skin-friendly vinegar remedies.

You'll learn when you should *and should not* use vinegar.

Join readers like L.S. of Monroe, N.C. who says "Thanks, this book is wonderful. A real life saver for me!"

Find different ways to combine vinegar with common foods like lemon juice, blueberries, onion, strawberries, garlic, honey, ginger and more to create recipes

that mix vinegar with other to help improve health and common household items quality of life.

All new ideas to put vinegar to work around the home to clean, disinfect and eliminate mold and mildew. Great for those with allergies or asthma!

Save money as you put Emily's latest discoveries to the test!

Yes that's over 1000 tried-and-true remedies and recipes in this handsome collector's edition and it's yours to enjoy for 90-risk free days. That's right, you can read and benefit from all 168-pages without obligation to keep it.

To get your copy of the *Vinegar Anniversary Book* direct from the publisher at the special introductory price of \$12.95 plus 3.98 shipping and handling (total of \$16.93, OH residents please add 6.5% sales tax) simply do this:

Write "Vinegar Anniversary" on a piece of paper and mail it along with your check or money order payable to: James Direct Inc., Dept. VA2536, 500 S. Prospect Ave., Box 980, Hartville, Ohio 44632.

You can charge to your VISA, MasterCard, Discover or American Express by mail. Be sure to include your card number, expiration date and signature.

Want to save even more? Do a favor for a relative or friend and order 2 books for only \$20 postpaid. It's such a thoughtful gift.

Remember: It's not available in book stores at this time. And you're protected by the publisher's 90-Day Money Back Guarantee.

SPECIAL BONUS - Act promptly and you'll also receive The Very Best Old-Time Remedies booklet absolutely FREE. It's yours to keep just for previewing "The Vinegar Anniversary Book." Supplies are limited. Order today.

http://www.jamesdirect.com

This was excerpted from an advertorial in USA Weekend.

Why Diet? Try Vinegar!

Eat and lose pounds the healthy way.

If you want to lose weight and keep it off -- hate dieting and are tired of taking pills, buying costly diet foods or gimmick "fast loss" plans that don't work-- you'll love the easy Vinegar way to lose all the pounds you want to lose. And keep them off!

Today, the natural Vinegar weight loss plan is a reality after years of research by noted vinegar authority Emily Thacker. Her just published book "Vinegar Anniversary" will help you attain your ideal weight the healthiest and most enjoyable way ever.

You'll never again have to count calories. Or go hungry. Or go to expensive diet salons. Or buy pills, drugs.

You'll eat foods you like and get a trimmer, slimmer figure-free of fat and flab-- as the pounds fade away.

To prove that you can eat great and feel great while losing ugly, unhealthy pounds the natural Vinegar way, you're invited to try the program for up to 3 months on a "You Must Be Satisfied Trial."

Let your bathroom scale decide if the plan works for you. You must be satisfied. You never risk one cent. Guaranteed.

What's the secret? Modern research combined with nature's golden elixir.

Since ancient times apple cider vinegar has been used in folk remedies to help control weight and speed-up the metabolism to burn fat. And to also aid overall good health.

Now-- for the first time --Emily has combined the latest scientific findings and all the weight loss benefits of vinegar into a program with lifetime benefits-to melt away pounds for health and beauty.

If you like food and hate dieting, you'll love losing pounds and inches the Vinegar way.

Suddenly your body will be energized with new vigor and zest as you combine nature's most powerful, nutritional foods with vinegar to trim away pounds while helping the body to heal itself.

You'll feel and look years

younger shedding unhealthy pounds that make one look older than their age.

According to her findings, staying trim and fit the Vinegar way also provides preventive health care against the curses of mankind-- cancer, heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure and other maladies.

In fact, the book's program is so complete that it also helps you:

- Learn secrets of ageless beauty and glowing skin
- Help build the immune system, to fight arthritis and disease
- Speed the metabolism to use natural thermogenesis to burn fat

PLUS so much more that you simply must use the book's easy Vinegar way to lose all the weight you want to lose--and enjoy all its other benefits-- before deciding if you want to keep it.

To Lose Pounds and Enjoy a 90-Day No-Risk Trial... Do This Now To Get Your Personal Copy of the Book:

Simply write "Vinegar Anniversary" on a piece of paper and send it with your check or money order of only \$12.95 plus \$3.98 shipping and handling (total of \$16.93, OH residents please add 6.5% sales tax) to:

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Special Bonus - Act promptly to also receive "The Very Best Old-Time Remedies" booklet absolutely FREE. Supplies are limited so order now.

http://www.jamesdirect.com

LETTERS

Dentist Recommends Vinegar

I have some useful advice that others may be interested in. When I got my Dentures several years ago, the Dentist told me use vinegar to get the plaque off them. So - about once a week I soak them in the wonder liquid and Presto - they sparkle.

I have since gotten implants - Since I am not fond of the hygienist scraping the posts for cleaning - I clean them with Vinegar before going for my check-up. On my last visit to her, she couldn't believe how clean they were and praised me for it!

I then asked the Dentist that put the implants in if the vinegar would harm the metal posts and he informed me it is OK to use it.

- D. L., New Braunfels, Tx.

Vinegar Heals Ear Ache in 2 days.

I have been plagued with an itchy ear for several months. It then developed into an earache. I was able to cure both the itch and earache in two days.

- J. D., Jacksonville, Fl.

Vinegar Diet helps mother of the Bride

This is kind of embarrassing, but here goes.

My name is Sarah Pierce. I am 58 years old, and through the years (in my mind's eye) I always thought I looked pretty decent.

Especially so when our second daughter was married. I really considered myself a rather 'smashing' Mother of the Bride.

That is, until the wedding pictures came back. I just couldn't believe it.

Here I am, definitely portly - not lean and svelte like I thought. Unfortunately the camera doesn't lie.

Since then, I heard about Emily Thacker's Vinegar Diet and decided to give it a try. What surprised me most was how much I could eat yet I was losing weight and inches. It was like I was getting thin, thinner and thinner yet with the Vinegar Diet. I just thought you should know.

- S. P., N. Canton, Oh.

NEWS & RESEARCH

Simple Vinegar used to reduce cervical cancer deaths by 31%

The latest study about vinegar, shows it will prevent an estimated 72,600 deaths from cervical cancer each year.

This according to a study released at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting in Chicago, IL.

The results were based over a 12 year period tracking 150,000 women in Mumbai, India, between the ages of 35-64 years.

The conclusion, a simple vinegar test significantly reduces cervical cancer deaths. Immediate plans are to implement this simple and successful screening test in developing countries.

The study had been planned for 16 years, but after the results were analyzed and found to be conclusive it was stopped at 12 years.

Vinegar has always been used for its versatility in home remedies, cooking and cleaning. And now scientific and medical findings are showing its a simple, low cost, non-invasive and safe for the patient.

Scarlett Johansson confesses her apple cider vinegar beauty secret

When celebrity beauty Scarlett Johansson needs to keep her skin looking beautiful and glowing one would think she would turn to high priced beauty creams.

Not so, according to an article in the February 2013 issue of Elle UK. She uses simple apple cider vinegar and its natural pH balancing properties to keep her skin looking amazing.

Submission Guidelines



We love hearing from readers—in fact, we couldn't publish this magazine without you!

To make sharing your photos and stories even eaiser, we've created an online submission form at *birdsandblooms.com/submit-your-story*. Each reader whose story, photo or short item is published will receive a *Birds & Blooms* tote bag (left).

Because of huge mail volume, our small staff can't acknowledge receipt of submissions, but we'll always let you know if they're published.

By submitting material for publication, you grant RDA Enthusiast Brands, LLC, its parent company, subsidiaries, affiliates, partners and licensees use of the material, including your name, hometown and state. We reserve the right to modify, reproduce and distribute the material in any medium and in any manner or appropriate place, including but not limited to magazines, promotional merchandise, and marketing and other related materials. We may contact you via phone, email or mail regarding your submission.

We strongly prefer online submissions using our form. However, we will accept mail submissions sent to BIRDS & BLOOMS, 1610 N 2ND ST STE 102 MILWAUKEE WI 53212-3906. Please note we are unable to return materials.



Find the Acorn & Win

In each issue of *Birds & Blooms*, we hide an acorn. If you find it, enter online at *birdsandblooms.com/contests*. We'll draw 25 winners from all the correct entries to receive a one-year subscription to *Birds & Blooms Extra*. The winners are also listed at the above URL. The acorn in our December/January issue was on page 91.

FEATURED READER

Autumn Ross

 $\label{lem:angle} \textbf{Favorite bird:} \ The \ cardinal. \ I \ love \\ listening \ to \ them \ sing \ back \ and \ forth.$

Favorite season for bird-watching:

Mid-spring. The leaves are not quite bloomed all the way and you can see all the birds in the trees.

Favorite flower: All of them! They all make me smile.

Day job: Small business owner of a printing and technology company with my husband.

Hobbies: Reading, gardening and learning about birds.

Favorite thing about your yard: It's surrounded by trees, so it's a bird haven!





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didyou know?

It's nesting season, a good time to consider some quirky facts about our favorite fliers.

Ducks lay many more eggs than songbirds. For instance, wood ducks can lay as many as 15 eggs in one nesting cycle.

Not all birds build nests. Two that don't are cowbirds, which lay their eggs in other birds' nests, and screech-owls, which use cavities that other birds or critters have hollowed out.

Ever wonder why there are so many pigeons around? They can nest up to eight times a year.

> Killdeer are fully feathered when they hatch. As soon as they dry, sometimes in as little as five minutes, they will leave the nest.

Most young don't stay in the nest long, but it's a different story with larger birds like owls, hawks and eagles. Bald eagles will stay in the nest up to 98 days!

Wood duck ducklings

NestWatch is a nationwide program that enlists amateur bird-watchers to monitor nests for scientific research. Last year, volunteers monitored 984 house-wren nesting attempts. See nestwatch.org.

Fascinated by eggs? Check out *The Book of Eggs*, by Mark E. Hauber, which offers detailed pictures of the eggs of 600 bird species from all over the world.

